

**The Honorable Mayor Thomas M. Menino**

**Address at the Boston Municipal Research Bureau's 80<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**March 27, 2012**

*Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, John. Thank you Sam Tyler and the entire Municipal Research Bureau for your insightful analysis.

Your report last week called attention to a signature issue in education reform – the ability for principals to place talented teachers where they are needed most.

After 21 months, the union refuses to accept a \$32,000,000 raise for teachers. A raise that would push the average salary well past its current mark of \$81,000 a year. Unfortunately, we must start planning for next year with the old process in place. A process that puts teachers with mis-matched skills in mis-matched classrooms. That's wrong.

A new teacher contract must provide more flexibility so that *all* Boston kids have access to an outstanding education in *all* of our schools. I thank the Bureau for calling attention to the high stakes in this contract.

Today, I want to focus on some of the things Boston has achieved and how we achieved them. I will highlight our approach and show how it could benefit the country, especially when Washington is so divided.

Why talk about this today? The Bureau is a “watchdog,” and a watchdog warns of danger. And it's dangerous that politicians in our country are now so focused on ideology, and not on the things that improve people's lives. I have been fortunate to be Mayor of our city for nearly 20 years, so I have some things to say as a leader who knows how to bring people together to get results.

This afternoon, I call attention to our own Boston model that is working so well.

I start with some important economic news.

With spring officially here, there is no doubt that Boston is a rising sun. There is \$3 billion of development under construction right now in Boston. And there's more to come. I am thrilled that we have a new plan with Millennium Partners at the Filene's site, and that construction will be underway by next spring. Across our city, cranes are in the sky and businesses are opening on the ground.

100 companies and 3,000 jobs have set up in our waterfront Innovation District since January 2010. That means about every week a new business arrives.

Today, I'm pleased to announce the City has finalized a partnership agreement with Tim Rowe and the Seaport Square development team. Tim will operate the new Boston Public Innovation Center. We will break ground in three weeks. By the fall, this unique space will be open to the public. Tim has a proven track record of helping entrepreneurs succeed. I have no doubt that his leadership will help make our new Innovation Center a vibrant launching pad for the innovation community.

Let me quickly share a few more figures.

Earlier this month, the City sold over \$200,000,000 in bonds at less than 3% interest. And our AAA bond rating was reaffirmed, too. These are strong indicators that the markets are confident in Boston.

From 2006 to 2011, Boston saw a 25% drop in crime.

14,000 more students are receiving arts instruction compared to three years ago.

We provided 3,100 businesses with financial and technical assistance last year.

All of these achievements are not accidents. They are the result of a partnership between a smart and strong private sector AND a smart and strong government. Thanks to this collaboration, Boston's development pipeline is bigger, our economy is better, and our future is brighter.

I believe our progress shows that Boston has a lot to offer the nation:

If the country had Boston's unemployment rate, 2.6 million more people would be on the job.

If the U.S. did as well as Boston, workers would see their hourly wage rise 34%.

If the country had Boston's foreclosure rate, 1,000,000 fewer families would be threatened with foreclosure.

If the U.S. had as many college graduates as Boston does, almost 28,000,000 more Americans would hold bachelor's degrees.

We would be a healthier nation, with 39,000,000 fewer obese citizens, even as Boston looks to drive our rates lower with our million pound challenge.

So, how could you put Boston's strategies at the centerpiece of a new national agenda that really puts people first? Today, I outline five steps.

1. **Create a National College Completion Effort.** Elisio Depina, a BPS student, had already dropped out of school once, and before graduating high school, said that he "didn't know how to start college." But then he got a call from Danny Rivera, a coach in our Success Boston program. Danny worked with him on everything from his college application to an update of his green card. Today, he's excelling at the University of New Haven – where he is now mentoring other students.

Boston was the first city in the nation to take on the issue of college completion, knowing that students who start, but don't finish, are falling off the path to the middle class. Nationally, we face a similar challenge: only half of students who enroll in college end up graduating. A national effort that provided the supports we gave Elisio could help this next generation reach its full potential.

2. **Put One Million High School Teens to Work Over the Summer.** We know that summer work puts kids on the right path to a career and gives them important life skills. In Boston, we spend time reaching out to individual businesses and work with them to create win-win opportunities for their companies and our students. A national effort of the same caliber would lead to a more robust future for our nation's teens and a more skilled workforce for our nation's companies.

Just look at Mariah Watkins, who is here today. She has always dreamed of being a doctor. But she wasn't sure where to start. Two summers ago she was offered a job in one of our hospitals. And what happened? She excelled and now plans to apply to medical school. Mariah's story reminds us when you offer a summer job, you don't just fill a job posting, you fulfill potential.

What we've built in Boston is unique and certainly a model for the country. But we can do better. Currently, only 14% of companies with 100 or more employees offer a single summer job. The City invests more than \$4,000,000 annually to support summer jobs; it would cost you just \$2,000 to hire a student for the summer. So, please go to [bostonsummerjobs.org](http://bostonsummerjobs.org) and sign up or fill out a card and leave it on your table.

3. **Launch a National Workforce Housing Program for Middle Income Households.**

Affordable housing is important to millions of American families, not just the most vulnerable. As companies look to cities for their density and human capital, people need more affordable opportunities to live closer to where they work.

Roads, bridges, and broadband come to mind when we talk about investing in infrastructure. But housing is perhaps the most important piece of neighborhood infrastructure we can invest in.

In Boston, we build housing for all of our people. That's one of the reasons our population is growing faster than New York City's, Chicago's, and San Francisco's. For example, Henrique Fernandes completely renovated his recently purchased house on Hendry Street in Dorchester with the help of a City housing program. He and his family are contributing to the revitalization of the neighborhood, and Henrique is even head of the neighborhood crime watch group. If we make the right housing investments, Henrique's story could be told in other neighborhoods in other cities around the country.

4. **Invest in Basic Life Science and Healthcare.** Proposed cuts to the National Institutes of Health threaten not only to cut off potential cures, but also tremendous amounts of economic opportunity. Federal investment in research is the foundation for a thriving life-science sector.

If Senator Kennedy were with us today, he would remind us how many lives are saved by NIH funding – from the patients who get access to cures, to the lab-technicians who are provided career tracks.

5. **Use Green Technology to Improve People's Lives.** Comprehensive energy policy leads to lower energy costs, job creation, and healthier communities. But federal investments in the green economy can't only be about new technology. They must be about tangible things that improve people's lives.

Through our Renew Boston program, Mary McCarthy of Brighton received one of our energy assessments and insulated her attic and walls. Now, she's saving over \$600 a year on electricity and heating costs, and is even installing solar panels through our solar program.

6,000 residents like Mary have taken part in Renew Boston. This in turn helped the company Next Step Living grow in Boston from 30 to 300 employees. If we want the green message to resonate with people, we should target green weatherizations for half the homes in the United States.

Education. Jobs. Housing. Health care. Climate change. The biggest issues of the day through a productive Boston lens. All would support a more innovative, more stable, more thriving economy.

But, the most important thing to draw from the Boston model isn't even on this list of policies. The most vital thing to replicate would be our cooperation and partnership. We know that nothing great has ever been achieved by dividing people. It was a team effort that created Boston Medical Center. It was a strong partnership that built the convention center. It was government, the private sector, and non-profits working hand-in-hand that transformed our Theater District. That helped the Longwood Medical Area grow. And it's collaboration that is making the Innovation District one of the most vibrant economic clusters in the country and Dudley Square a great success story of urban revival.

Together, we have showed the Boston model is about partnership; not partisanship.

*I raise all of this today not because I care what other politicians think about Boston. It's because of what they think about the country. They are wrong when they put ideology above impact. They are wrong when they put party before helping people. They could learn a lot by taking another look at Boston and at what we all have accomplished together. Thank you very much. Now let's get back to work.*